



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Department
Office of Governor Deval L. Patrick
Press Release**

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GOVERNOR PATRICK HONORS FALLEN MASSACHUSETTS SERVICE MEMBERS

BOSTON – Thursday, May 22, 2014 – Governor Deval Patrick today honored fallen Massachusetts servicemen and women at the Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund's *Remember and Honor Event*. The Governor was joined at the event by Secretary of Veterans' Services Coleman Nee, Heroes Fund President Stephen Kerrigan, Vice President Thomas Crohan, several board members, Attorney General Martha Coakley and Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, as well as families of fallen service members.



*Thursday, May 22, 2014 – Governor Patrick honors Massachusetts' military heroes in remembrance of Memorial Day at the Soldiers & Sailors Monument at the Boston Common.
(Photo: Eric Haynes / Governor's Press Office)*

"We honor and express our solemn gratitude for the brave sons and daughters of Massachusetts who made the ultimate sacrifice protecting our freedoms abroad," said

Governor Patrick. "We owe all of our past and present service members and their families our heartfelt thanks and support, and the memories of our fallen military personnel will never be forgotten."

The event included a reading of the names of Massachusetts service members lost as a result of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan since September 11, 2001. Thousands of American flags were displayed on Boston Common to remember and commemorate the sacrifices of all fallen Massachusetts soldiers throughout the state's history.

"As we approach Memorial Day, we pay special remembrance to those that lost their lives on the battlefields of this great nation," said Secretary of Veterans' Services Coleman Nee. "I encourage all citizens of the Commonwealth to be mindful of the sacrifice made by these men, women and their families and to take a moment to thank a Gold Star Family or a veteran for their service to a grateful nation."

The Patrick Administration leads the nation in services for veterans and their families and continues to implement employment assistance and workforce training programs for members of the armed forces, veterans and their spouses. In 2011, the Administration launched an aggressive employment campaign focused on increasing the hiring of Massachusetts veterans. Among these initiatives, the Patrick Administration partnered with major trade associations to encourage them to hire veterans and circulate information on veterans' benefits. One example includes the Administration's partnership with the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce to launch the "Boots to Business" program, which expands mentoring and networking opportunities and educates local employers about the skills service members gain in the military.

Recently Governor Patrick continued to expand the Commonwealth's strong level of services by signing "An Act Relative to Veterans Allowances, Labor, Outreach and Recognition" (VALOR Act II). The legislation created increased supports for workforce training for veterans, certification and training requirements for municipal veteran service officers, continued access to veterans' services and increased protections for servicemen and women seeking higher education in the Commonwealth.

The Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing support to the families of military personnel with ties to Massachusetts who have died as a result of active duty service post September 11, 2001. This support comes in the form of financial assistance, referrals, advocacy and case management from a staff social worker.

More than 372,000 veterans currently live in Massachusetts, including 42,000 men and women who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 9/11. The Patrick Administration has worked to ensure newly returning veterans, as well as Massachusetts' aging veteran population, continue to receive quality health, housing and employment services to honor their service. To learn more about services for Massachusetts veterans, visit www.mass.gov/veterans.

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